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Death and Judgment in the *Apocalypse of Paul*: Old Imagery and Monastic Reinvention

DOI 10.1515/zac-2016-0005

Abstract: This paper focuses on the post-mortem judgment scene of the *Apocalypse of Paul* and explores how, while preserving the traditional judicial imagery of earlier apocalyptic texts, it profoundly reinvented its meaning. Nightmare visions of God's tribunal were quite common in 4th-century Christianity, and were often placed at the starting or turning point of important ascetic careers, such as those of Jerome and Evagrius of Pontus. The embedding of God's dreadful judgment in ascetic discipline, however, is most apparent in the Pachomian *corpus*. Here its features are similar to those in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, a work which stems, like the Pachomian literature, from late 4th-century Egypt. This helps interpret the tribunal setting of this apocalypse as a new monastic staging of old images, and provides further evidence to support the hypothesis of the origin of the *Apocalypse of Paul* within the Pachomian *koinonia*.

Keywords: *Apocalypse of Paul*, Divine Judgment, Pachomian Monasticism

This short contribution will exclusively focus on the post-mortem judgment scene of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, but it is intended as integral part of a broader investigation of this text, which, except for a seminal article on its dating and some important intuitions on its meaning,[1] has never been the object of an exhaus-

1 Pierluigi Piovanelli, "Les origines de l'*Apocalypse de Paul* reconsiderées," *Apocrypha* 4 (1993): 25–64; Kirsti B. Copeland, *Mapping the Apocalypse of Paul: Geography, Genre and History* (A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, June 2001). Kirsti Copeland has published and developed part of the results of her research in the following articles: Kirsti B. Copeland, "Sinners and Post-Mortem 'Baptism' in the Acherusian Lake," in *The Apocalypse of Peter* (ed. Jan N. Bremmer and István Czachesz; Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha 7; Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 91–107; eadem, "Thinking with Oceans: Muthos, Revelation and the *Apocalypse of Paul*," in *The Visio Pauli and the Gnostic Apocalypse of Paul* (ed. Jan N. Bremmer and István Czachesz; Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha 9; Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 77–104; eadem, " 'The Holy Conquest': Competition for the Best Afterlife in the *Apocalypse of Paul* and Late Antique Egypt," in *Other Worlds and Their Relation to This World:*

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tive study.[2] The features of the judgment scene in our *Apocalypse* have been only taken into account by scholars of ancient Judaism in order to illustrate passages of works such as the *Testament of Abraham* or the so-called *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*;[3] its appearance and meaning in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, however,

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Early Jewish and Ancient Christian Traditions (ed. Tobias Nicklas et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 369–389. The monograph of Claude Carozzi, *Eschatologie et au-delà: Recherches sur l'Apocalypse de Paul* (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 1994), as demonstrated by Copeland, falls short of the symbolic complexity of the *Apocalypse of Paul* and its literary and religious environment, and is negatively conditioned by its dating of the text to the 3d century.

2 As is well known, no critical edition of this apocryphon is available, although much excellent philological work has already been devoted to the establishment of the critical text of some of its versions. For the Greek (*Apocalypsis Pauli graeca*), one still has to rely on Kostantin von Tischendorf, ed., *Apocalypses Apocryphae Mosis, Esdrae, Pauli, Johannis, item Mariae Dormitio: additis Evangeliorum et actuum Apocryphorum supplementis* (Leipzig: Mendelssohn, 1866), 34–69; for the Latin (*Apocalypsis Pauli latina*), there is now the synoptic edition published by Theodore Silverstein and Anthony Hilhorst, *The Apocalypse of Paul: A New Critical Edition of the Three Long Latin Versions* (Cahiers d'orientalisme 21; Geneva: Cramer, 1997), 66–167. The Coptic (*Apocalypsis Pauli coptica*) was edited by Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *Coptic Texts* 5: *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* (New York: AMS, 1915), but it can no longer be read without the comments of Copeland, *Mapping* (see note 1), which I will use as edition and translation, and Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, "The Coptic *Apocalypse of Paul* in Ms Or 7023," in Bremmer and Czachesz, *The Visio Pauli and the Gnostic Apocalypse of Paul* (see note 1), 158–197. The Slavonic text (*Apocalypsis Pauli slavonica*), of which a great number of manuscripts have survived, has been recently reconstructed by Nikolaos H. Trunte, *Reiseführer durch das Jenseits: Die Apokalypse des Paulus in der Slavia Orthodoxa* (Slavistische Beiträge 490; Munich: Sagner, 2013), 239–357. The Syriac text (*Apocalypsis Pauli syriaca*) is preserved in two different redactions, an Eastern and a Western one. The former was published by Giuseppe Ricciotti, "Apocalypsis Pauli Syriace," *Orientalia* N.S. 2 (1933): 1–25; 120–149, relying on two manuscripts alone (at least 15 others are now known); the latter is unedited and, to the best of my knowledge, is attested by at least five manuscripts. Other versions, like the Armenian, the Georgian, and the Arabic will not be taken into consideration here, insofar as they are probably secondary (although more investigation is necessary, in particular on the Georgian and Arabic texts, in order to establish this point with more certainty).

3 See Dale C. Allison, Jr., *Testament of Abraham* (Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 37, 260, 344 (note 15), 398 (note 24), 404. Allison's approach does not add much, in this regard, to the parallels noted by Montague R. James, *The Testament of Abraham* (Texts and Studies: Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature 2,2; Cambridge: University Press, 1892), 21–22, whose attitude towards the *Apocalypse of Paul* in this work was rather negative ("it must be borne in mind that the Apocalypse of Paul is to a large extent a compilation from earlier works"). The same can be said for Bernd J. Diebner, *Zephanjas Apokalypsen* (Jüdische Schriften aus Hellenistisch-Römischer Zeit 5,9; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2003), 1197–1229, whose notes to the translation of the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* never go beyond the establishment of parallels.

has been almost completely overlooked.[4] After a short account of the judgment setting, I will present a working hypothesis which relies on relatively little discussed results of previous scholarly research: in particular, I will refer to Pierluigi Piovanelli's dating of the whole text to the second half of the 4th century[5] and to Kirsti Copeland's hypothesis that the *Apocalypse of Paul* may have stemmed from a Pachomian milieu.[6]

Indeed, since the latter suggestion no effort has been made to locate the *Apocalypse of Paul* within a concrete historical situation, which is the indispensable premise to any further determination of its symbolic, literary and religious meaning. The starting point, then, must necessarily be the question as to why an apocalypse is written at a certain point in history. Though this question may appear trivial, it nevertheless has not been too often asked, albeit its special importance in the case of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, for this text will eventually have become a model for subsequent Christian otherworldly apocalypticism. A similar question was asked by Enrico Norelli in previous contributions:[7] why does a text focusing on otherworldly visionary experiences of divine revelation appear and have such a success at a particular point in history? Indeed, even more than in other fields, in that of apocalyptic literature the loss of material may cause errors in perspective; in addition, when studying the historical course of apocalyptic traditions it immediately becomes clear that these traditions also circulated in contexts other than the literary genre called "apocalypse," and that they never really disappeared. But the historical question as to why an apocalypse appears does not focus on content so much as on the subjects who transmit an apocalyptic tradition. Therefore, what I would like to ask is this: what new approach to the traditional contents has crystallized them into a literary product such as an apocalypse, which in its turn makes them new, even though their external features may not seem to have radically changed? Norelli spoke in this regard of "l'histoire de la production de textes dans des circonstances chaque fois données, à l'aide

4 The only scholar so far to have tried to treat this scene in its own right is Meira Z. Kensky, *Trying Man, Trying God: The Divine Courtroom in Early Jewish and Christian Literature* (WUNT II 289; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 271–283. Another interesting collection of essays on the same topic does not take the judgment scene of the *Apocalypse of Paul* into account: Ari Mermelstein and Shalom E. Holtz, eds., *The Divine Courtroom in Comparative Perspective* (Biblical Interpretation 132; Leiden: Brill, 2015).

5 Piovanelli, "Les origines" (see note 1).

6 Copeland, *Mapping* (see note 1), 177–178.

7 See in particular Enrico Norelli, "Apocalittica: come pensarne lo sviluppo?," *Ricerche storico-bibliche* 7 (1995): 163–200, and idem, "Pertinence théologique et canonicité: les premières apocalypses chrétiennes," *Apocrypha* 8 (1997): 147–164.

de structurations différentes et chaque fois innovatrices d'éléments puisés à une tradition commune."[8] One may also further clarify this question by speaking, as David Frankfurter has done on different occasions[9] (though without actually problematizing this terminology), in terms of "apocalyptic discourse." A discursive formation, in the sense of Michel Foucault, is a system of knowledge which creates its object according to how the subjects of knowledge problematize it;[10] if, then, the problematization changes, the discursive formation will change accordingly. And the apocalyptic discourse in late 4th-century Egypt, regardless of the evident continuities, had changed; the subjects who re-problematized certain apocalyptic contents were monks, who reinterpreted the old imagery on account of new needs. This re-problematization eventually led to the writing of a new apocalyptic text, the *Apocalypse of Paul*, an "innovative structuration of traditional elements," as Norelli put it.[11] Within the limited scope of this paper, I will attempt to provide new evidence in support of the suggestion, originally formulated by Copeland, that the monastic context which motivated the emergence of the *Apocalypse of Paul* was the Pachomian *koinonia*, the monastic network which, in about the same period, and using much the same apocalyptic material, was also producing the hagiographic corpus of its leaders.

In another sense, however, this contribution will have to give up strong ambitions of historicity insofar as it will not be able to ground the hypothetical historical context it suggests for the *Apocalypse of Paul* in historical facts, but only in literary analysis and in the sketchy outline of a cultural atmosphere. Indeed, as is often the case in apocryphal and especially apocalyptic literature, we are not able to track the pathways of a text on the basis of factual evidence; as Frankfurter rightly observed, "we must assume the texts' continuity and importance in order to explain their existence in Greek and Coptic manuscripts of the later period," but "for the third and fourth centuries the historian must be satisfied with an amorphous and implicit 'presence' of these texts."[12]

8 Norelli, "Pertinence théologique" (see note 7), 150.

9 David Frankfurter, "The Legacy of Jewish Apocalypses in Early Christianity: Regional Trajectories," in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* (ed. James C. VanderKam and William Adler; vol. 3,4 of *Compendium Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum: Jewish Traditions in early Christian literature*; Assen: VanGorcum, 1996), 129–200; idem, "Early Christian Apocalypticism: Literature and Social World," in *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* 1 (ed. John J. Collins; London: Continuum, 2000), 415–453.

10 See especially Michel Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Bibliothèque des sciences humaines; Gallimard: Paris, 1969).

11 Norelli, "Pertinence théologique" (see note 7), 150.

12 Frankfurter, "The Legacy" (see note 9), 164.

1 The Judgment

Let us start with a brief overview of the judgment scene. Although the tradition of this scene is rather problematic, still it emerges clearly that it stages the post-mortem process of three souls—those of an upright man, a sinner, and a hypocrite sinner—the latter attempting to hide its evil deeds and escape God's sentencing. Once the soul of the upright one has left its body, its guardian angel rejoices in it and declares himself witness to its good deeds. This allows the soul to undergo unharmed an examination performed by demons, which is another traditional image that will remain outside the focus of this contribution.[13] Having successfully passed through this initial, intimidating examination thanks to the angel's testimony, the soul is led to stand in the presence of God's throne, accompanied by choirs of worshipping angels. Here the guardian angel takes up an actual counsellor's function, and argues in favor of the soul before God, much like a lawyer. It is worth noting the gesture of the angel, who, by pointing at the soul, plays, also in a physical manner, the role of a lawyer standing between the judge and the defendant: "the angel ran ahead and pointed him out, saying, God, remember his labors; for this is the soul, whose works I related to you."[14] The soul is declared

13 Compare it for example with Origen, *Homilia in Psalmum XXXVI* 5,7 (ed. Emanuela Prinzivalli, *Origene: Omelie sui Salmi: Homiliae in Psalmos XXXVI–XXXVII–XXXVIII* [Biblioteca Patristica 18; Florence: Nardini, 1991], 242,41–49): *eo tempore cum anima separatur a corpore et occurrunt ei peccatores daemones, aduersae potestates, spiritus aeris huius qui eam uolunt detinere et reuocare ad se si quid in ea suorum operum gestorumque cognouerint. Venit enim ad unamquamque animam de hoc mundo exeuntem princeps huius mundi et aeriae potestates et requirunt si inueniant in ea aliquid suum*. Here we have a very close parallel to the scene of the departure of the soul from the body in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, which was used indeed to support a dating of the *Apocalypse* to 3d century (Carozzi, *Eschatologie* [see note 1], 48–54). See also Anthony's vision in Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Vita Antonii* 65,2–3 (SC 400, 304,7–12 Bartelink): ἔβλεπεν ἑαυτὸν ὥσπερ ἔξωθεν ἑαυτοῦ γινόμενον, καὶ ὡς εἰς τὸν ἀέρα ὁδηγούμενον ὑπό τινων· εἶτα πικροὺς καὶ δεινούς τινας ἑστῶτας ἐν τῷ ἀέρι καὶ θέλοντας αὐτὸν κωλῦσαι ὥστε μὴ διαβῆναι. Τῶν δὲ ὁδηγούντων ἀντιμαχομένων, ἀπῄτουν ἐκεῖνοι λόγον, εἰ μὴ ὑπεύθυνος αὐτοῖς εἴη. Note the similar syntactic form in all three passages: *si inueniant in ea aliquid suum* (Origen); εἰ μὴ ὑπεύθυνος αὐτοῖς εἴη (Athanasius); *uideamus si habemus aliquid in te nostrum* (*Apocalypsis Pauli latina* [98,21–22 Silverstein/Hilhorst (St. Gall manuscript)]). Further parallels cannot be taken into account here.
14 *Apocalypsis Pauli latina* 14 (92–93,7–10 S./H.; trans. James K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation Based on M.R. James* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993], 624 [Elliott translates the Latin]): Paris manuscript: *Precurret autem angelus et indicauit dicens: Deus, memorare laborum eius. Haec est enim anima cuius tibi, domine, operam referebam*; St. Gall manuscript: *Precurrit autem angelus ante eam et indicauit dicens: Deus, memor esto laborum eius. Haec est cuius tibi cotidiae opera referebam*; Arnhem manuscript: *Cucurrit angelus et signans dicens: Deus, esto memor laboris*

by God upright and worthy of joining the saints in paradise. In the case of the sinner, however, the events following the departure of the soul from the body are the direct opposite to those experienced by that of the upright. The way to God's tribunal is now more troubled and its description only offers a sketched hint at a heavenly ascension, at a certain stage of which the soul meets the "powers" at the gate of the sky (although this gate is only mentioned in the East Syriac version).[15] These "guardians" begin to torment it, and they also try to stop it[16] and to see whether it has anything belonging to them. Here some sort of synthesis seems to have been imposed upon an originally more extended narrative: the ascension of the sinful soul to judgment—and even previous punishment—in heaven (a relatively unusual location for judgment and punishment).[17] A more detailed idea of this material can be evinced from the other *Apocalypse of Paul*, preserved in the fifth Nag Hammadi Codex, where Paul is shown a sinner's soul that is being guided through the heavens and tormented with whips, and which

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eius. Hec sunt eius facta que offerebam singulis diebus in conspectu tuo. None of these elements (the angel's gesture and his intercession) are attested in Greek, and the Latin version apparently provides the most complete text. The reconstruction of the long Slavonic version is the closest to the Latin (*Apocalypsis Pauli slavonica* 14 [269 Trunte]: и прѣтечаше прѣдъ неѫ свои аг҃ль вѣпїѭ г҃а: бе҃ помилми тварь своѭ, се бо ѥ҃ ежѥ дѣла принесѫ ти на всѧ дн҃и, сътвори ѥи по твоѥи силѣ—"Its angel ran forward and exclaimed and said: 'O God, think of your creature, because lo, it is the one, whose actions I brought before you every day; do to her according to your might.' "). The East Syriac version does not record the angel's gesture, and it keeps a more generic version of the intercession (*Apocalypsis Pauli syriaca* 12 [14] [14 Ricciotti]: ܐܡܪ ܗܘ ܡܠܐܟܐ ܕܗܘ ܕܡܕܒܪܢܐ ܠܢܦܫܐ ܘܐܡܪ ܐܠܗܐ ܪܚܡܢܐ ܘܚܢܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܗܕܐ ܢܦܫܐ ܠܐ ܬܫܟܚ ܘܠܐ ܬܫܒܩ ܠܗ ܘܥܒܕ ܠܗ ܟܕ ܣܓܝ ܪܚܡܝܟ ܘܟܕ ܫܪܝ ܕܝܢܝܟ—"And the angel who was the soul's guide began and said: 'O compassionate and merciful Lord God, remember this soul and do not forget it; and do to it according to the abundance of your mercies and of your right judgments.'"). The Coptic text for this passage is missing altogether.

15 *Apocalypsis Pauli syriaca* 12 [14] (16 R.): ܟܕ ܡܛܐ ܠܬܪܥܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ ܚܙܬ ܢܦܫܐ ܕܒܝܫܐ ܫܠܝܛܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܒܝܫܐ ܕܬܪܥ—"When it arrived at the gate of the firmament, the soul saw the evil powers."

16 *Apocalypsis Pauli latina* 16 (98–99,20–21 S./H.): Paris manuscript: *ubi perges, misera anima, et audis precurrere in celo?*; St Gall manuscript: *quo pergis, o misera anima, et audes praecurrere in caelum?*; Arnhem manuscript: *ubi itura es, misera anima, et audes intueri celum?*; the East Syriac text reads: ܐܝܟܐ ܕܐܙܠܬ ,ܢܦܫ ܡܣܟܝܢܬܐ ܕܚܝܠܬ—"Where are you fleeing, o miserable soul?" (*Apocalypsis Pauli syriaca* 14 [16] [16 R.]). The Slavonic, closer to the Latin as usual, reads: докѫ дѫ идеши, окаанаа дш҃е, сѫдѣла есн теци на нб҃о—"Where are you going, O miserable soul? You have dared to walk towards the sky" (*Apocalypsis Pauli slavonica* 16 [276 T.]); the Greek text has: ταλαίπωρε ψυχή, ποῦ πορεύει;—"Where are you going, o miserable soul?" (*Apocalypsis Pauli graeca* [16] [45 Tischendorf]), although the question is attributed to the guardian angel of the soul.

17 On this point see Paolo Sacchi, *Apocrifi dell'Antico Testamento* 2 (2d ed.; Torino: UTET, 2006), 522, and Christfried Böttrich, *Das slavische Henochbuch* (vol. 5,7 of *Jüdische Schriften aus Hellenistisch-Römischer Zeit*; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1996), 854 (note d).

is then met with the "custom officer" at the gate of the Fourth Heaven—similarly to the Syriac version of our *Apocalypse of Paul* (ⲡⲓ ⲧⲉⲗⲱⲛⲏⲥ ⲉⲧⲣⲙⲟⲟⲥ ⲉⲛ̄ ϯⲙⲉⲉⲩ ⲭⲧⲟ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉ).[18] This torment undergone by the soul is much more richly detailed in the Coptic version of our *Apocalypse of Paul*. In the Nag Hammadi apocalypse the soul tries to defend itself by asking for witnesses who, having been summoned, eventually confirm its sins. An analogous scene is found in our *Apocalypse of Paul*, but in the third part of the judgment section, where the proceeding of the hypocrite sinner is staged. This last part of the judgment section is particularly relevant to the present investigation; here the third soul, that of the hypocrite sinner, is introduced to the presence of God who is described as "just God, God the judge."[19] As in a tribunal interrogation, God inquires about the soul's deeds, in order to induce it to confess its sins, while at the same time manifesting his omniscience (*Quid fecisti? Tu enim missericordiam numquam fecisti*).[20] The soul, however, lies in attempt to hide its transgressions: "Lord, I did not sin."[21] But, unlike an earthly tribunal, the soul is naked before God the judge, and its faults are clearly evident to him: "Here nothing whatever shall be hidden, for when the souls come to worship in sight of the throne, both the good works and the sins of each one are made manifest."[22] God then asks the angel of this soul to read the

18 *Apocalypsis Pauli* (NHC V,2) 20,15–1 (ed. Jean-Marc Rosenstiehl and Michael Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul (NH V,2)* [BCNH, Section Textes 31; Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2005], 104–105; compare with Douglas M. Parrott, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codices V, 2–5 and VI with Papyrus Berolinensis 8502, 1 and 4* [NHS 11; Leiden: Brill, 1979], 54).

19 *Apocalypsis Pauli latina* 17 (104–105,3 S./H.; trans. 626 E.): Paris manuscript: *Deus iustus, deus iudex*; St. Gall manuscript: *deus iudex iustus et uerax*; Arnhem manuscript: *domine iustus iudex*.

20 *Apocalypsis Pauli latina* 17 (104–105,7–8 S./H. [Paris manuscript]); St. Gall manuscript: *Puto enim quia missericordiam numquam feceris*; the Arnhem manuscript only includes the question: *Quid fecisti?* The Greek lacks this passage, but the Coptic reads: ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲣⲣ̄ ⲟⲩ ⲉⲙ̄ ⲡⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲡⲁⲛ-ⲧⲱⲥ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟ ⲟⲩⲁⲧⲛⲁ—"What did you do in the world? You are certainly merciless" (*Apocalypsis Pauli coptica* [17] [254 Copeland; trans. 193 Copeland]); *Apocalypsis Pauli slavonica* 17 (281 T.): ѥ҆то оубо сътвори҆ла е҆си, и҆ли какѡ нелѷ́тва бы҃· —"What have you done, were you perchance merciless?"; the East Syriac version, as well as the Greek text, lacks God's question.

21 *Apocalypsis Pauli latina* 17 (104–105,13–14 S./H. [Paris and Arnhem manuscripts]; trans. 626 E.): *domine non peccavi*. Compare the *Apocalypsis Pauli graeca* [17] (47 T.): οὐχ ἥμαρτον; *Apocalypsis Pauli slavonica* 17 (281 T.): не съгрѣшихъ гн҃; *Apocalypsis Pauli coptica* [17] (254 C.): ⲡⲭ̄ⲥ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲓⲣ̄ ⲛⲟⲃⲉ; *Apocalypsis Pauli syriaca* 16 [17] (20 R.): ܐܠܗܝ ܐܢܐ ܠܐ ܚܛܝܬ ܐܢܐ.

22 *Apocalypsis Pauli latina* 17 (104–105,17–23 S./H.; trans. 627 E.): Paris manuscript: *Adhuc te putas in seculum permanere? Si hunusquisque uestrum illic peccans caelat et abscondit peccatum suum proximo suo, hic uero non absconditur quicquam. Cum enim uenerunt adorare anime in conspectus troni, et opera bona uniuscuiusque et peccatum eius manifestatur*; St Gall manuscript: *Adhuc te putas in seculo cummanere, sicut unusquisque uestrum illic peccat celans et abscondens proximo suo? Hic uero non ita. Cum uero ueniunt adorare in conspectu dei throni, tunc et opera*

"cirographum of [the soul]'s sins,"[23] i. e. the report in which all its evil works are recorded. God's omniscience, therefore, does not overpower the proper functioning of the perfect juridical mechanism of the court, whose aim is to confront the soul with the gravity of its sins. The *cheirographon* and similar documents are an important ingredient in many apocalyptic narratives, which is featured as held in the angels' hands (see the *Testament of Abraham*, *Revelation*, the achmimic fragment known as *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*[24] and the Nag Hammadi *Apoca-*

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bona uniuscuiusque et peccata eius manifestantur; Arnhem manuscript: *adhuc reputas esse in hoc seculo, sicud unusquisque illorum illic relinquit omnia que facit et abscondit proximo suo? Hic autem non sic. Quando autem ueninut adorare in conspectu domini, tunc et opera uniuscuiusque bona et mala apparebunt*; *Apocalypsis Pauli graeca* [17] (47 T.): ἀμὴν δοκεῖς ἵνα ἂν εἶ εἰς τὸν κόσμον, καὶ λανθάνειν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους; οὐκ οἶδας ὅτι, ἡνίκα ἄν τις τελευτήσῃ, ἔμπροσθεν τρέχουσιν αἱ πράξεις αὐτοῦ κἄν τε ἀγαθαὶ κἄν τε πονηραί εἰσιν; *Apocalypsis Pauli slavonica* 17 (282 T.): нли нн҃ѣ сѧ мнишн сѫщи въ мі҃рѣ нсходѧщи, ꙗкожє къждо таимо сътрѣшаѫщихъ танны и съкрꙑваѫщихъ ѿ блнжнѣгѡ. сде бо нѣ҃ такѡ. и егда прихождать поклонити сѧ прѣдъ по҃тлмь бжі҃имь, и дѣла когождо, любо добра любо зла, и грѣси егѡ wблічѧѭть сѧ—"Or do you think now to be in the world, whereas you are going out [of it], just as each of the sinners there, who [do] secret things and conceal them away from the neighbor? Here it is not so. And when they come to worship before God's throne, everyone's deeds—be they good or bad—and his sins become manifest." *Apocalypsis Pauli coptica* [17] (254 C., trans. 193 C.): ⲉⲣⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲛⲉ ϫⲉ ⲡⲕⲟⲥⲟⲙⲟⲥ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲁⲓ· ⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲟⲩⲁ ⲡⲟⲩⲁ̄ ⲣ̄ ⲛⲟⲃⲉ ⲉⲧⲣⲱⲡ ⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲫⲛⲟⲃⲉ ⲉ̄ ⲡⲉⲧ ⲣⲓⲧⲟⲩⲱⲕ· ⲉⲩⲱⲁⲛⲉⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲙ̄ ⲡⲙ̄ⲧⲟ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲑⲣⲟⲛⲟⲥ ⲙ̄ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲱⲁⲣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲃⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲁ̄ ⲡⲟⲩⲁ̄ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲡⲉⲫⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲛ ⲟⲩⲱ̄ⲛ̄ⲉ̄ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ —"Do you think this is the world, each one sinning and hiding his sin from his neighbor? For when they [eventually] come before the throne of God, the sins of each one and his good [deeds] are manifest."; missing in both Syriac versions.

23 *Apocalypsis Pauli latina* 17 (106,3–4 S./H. [Paris and Arnhem manuscripts]): *cirographum*. Compare the *Apocalypsis Pauli graeca* [17] (47 T.): τὸ χειρόγραφον τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων σου; *Apocalypsis Pauli slavonica* 17 (283 T.): писанїє—"[a] writing"; one manuscript has a reading closer to the Greek: писаны вѣсѧ грѣхы еѫ—"All his sins registered"; *Apocalypsis Pauli coptica* [17] (255 C.): ⲟⲩⲭⲉⲓⲣⲟⲅⲣⲁⲫⲟⲛ; *Apocalypsis Pauli syriaca* 16 [17] (20 R.): ܡܕܡ ܕܟܬܒ—"[something] in the likeness of a written document."

24 Georg Steindorff, *Die Apokalypse des Elias: Eine unbekannte Apokalypse und Bruchstücke der Sophonias-Apokalypse* (TU 17,3a; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899), 38–39 (ⲡϥⲭⲉⲓⲣⲟⲅⲣⲁⲫⲟⲛ—"seine Schriftrolle"). The dating to the first century C. E. and the nature of this fragment, especially the attribution of the vision it narrates to "Zephaniah," are far from ascertained, although they are usually taken for granted in scholarly literature. Of this text, it is said, only two fragments must have survived (apart from a citation of an "Apocalypse of Zephaniah" in Clement of Alexandria): a very short Sahidic fragment and a longer Akhmimic fragment, both originating from Shenoute's White Monastery in Egypt and preserved in two different manuscripts which contained the *Apocalypse of Elijah*. The latter indeed is the only foundation to the claim that both fragments belong to the same text, and since the Sahidic fragment explicitly mentions "Zephaniah" as the seer, also the Akhmimic fragment is attributed to the same prophet. These, however, are certainly not strong arguments. Steindorff, *Apokalypse des Elias* (see above), 15, was the first

lypse of Paul). The *Testament of Abraham* also has some points of contact with our text, even though the report is generically called "charta" instead of *cheirographon* and the angels register the soul's deeds during the procedure itself. The similarity between the two texts is due to the shared tribunal setting where the *cheirographon* serves as a bureaucratic device, providing the court with the necessary evidence for an orderly execution of the procedure. God asks whether the soul has repented at any time during the last year of its earthly life, which would suffice to win his mercy. As the soul remains silent (*obmutuit*/*conticuit*),[25] the guardian angel summons two witnesses, introduced in their turn by another angel, who acts as tribunal officer (*iube, domine, angelum illum exhibere animas illas*).[26] Faced with God's exhortation, and having been presented with the witnesses, the soul confesses its sins against them, and the condemning sentence is then pronounced. Now, as we said, although this court setting is traditional, it also seems to be highly original; for although the post-mortem judgment is a familiar theme which often appears in Christian texts, it is important to point out that, among the sources that are still available to us, this apocalypse presents us with an unusual elaboration where the handling of the individual is especially

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to put forward this hypothesis, although in hesitant terms: "Da der Text dieses Blattes [of the shorter Sahidic fragment] in der Phraseologie an einzelnen Stellen auffallend mit der anonymen Apokalypse der achmimischen Handschrift übereinstimmt, so ist man zunächst *geneigt*, in ihm einen sahidischen Paralleltext zu jener Apokalypse zu vermuten, um so mehr, als ja die übrigen sahidischen Blätter der Eliasapokalypse parallel sind. *Würde* diese Annahme stimmen, so *wäre* auch der Titel der anonymen achmimischen Apokalypse gefunden" (my emphasis). Subsequent scholarship, however, has overlooked Steindorff's caution, while failing to look for stronger arguments in support of his thesis. The only thorough, albeit somewhat idiosyncratic, discussion of the textual problems after the publication of Steindorff's edition is found in Bernd J. Diebner, *Zephanjas Apokalypsen* (see note 3), 1143–1190.

25 *Apocalypsis Pauli latina* 17 (104–105,20–23 S./H.); *Apocalypsis Pauli graeca* [17] (46 T.): ἐφιμώθη. The Coptic text expands the reading attested by the Latin (*Apocalypsis Pauli coptica* [17] [254 C., trans. 193 C.]: ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲉⲩⲛⲟⲩ ⲇⲉ ⲉⲧ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲁ ⲧⲉⲥⲧⲁⲡⲣⲟ ⲧⲱⲙ· ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲥⲟⲛ̄ ⲗⲗⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ ⲱⲁϩⲉ ⲉ ϫⲱ—"And at that moment, its mouth closed. It did not find a single word to say"); *Apocalypsis Pauli slavonica* 17 (282–283 T.): та . . . оумлькѣ—"It became silent"; absent in Syriac.

26 *Apocalypsis Pauli latina* 17 (106,22–23 S./H. [Paris manuscript]); St. Gall has *illum* instead of *istum*. *Apocalypsis Pauli graeca* [17] (47 T.): κύριε, κέλευσον παραστῆναι τῶν αγγέλων τὰς ψυχάς. *Apocalypsis Pauli coptica* [17] (255 C., trans. 194 C.): ⲉⲓⲟⲩⲱⲱ ⲉⲧⲣⲉⲧⲉⲧⲛ̄ⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲓⲫⲩⲭⲏ ⲉ ⲧⲙⲛⲛⲧⲉ—"I want you to bring these souls forward"; *Apocalypsis Pauli slavonica* 17 (285 T.): повелн аг҃лу прѣстати онож и аг҃лъ онож дш҃а—"Order that the angels of that and that soul come forth." The East Syriac version has an interesting variant, since the souls are not directly summoned, but their guardian angels bring them before God and speak for them (*Apocalypsis Pauli syriaca* 16 [17] [20 R.]: ܗܟܝܬ ܡܐܡܪ ـــ ܕܡܚܝܠ ـــ ܗܘ ܡܠܐܟ ܕܢܦܫ ܗܘ ܗܝ ܕܐܢܫ ܗܘ ܗܝ ܕܢܦܫ ܗܘ ܗܝ ܕܐܢܫ ܕܡܐ ܐܝ ܕܐܬܐ ܗܟܐ ܥܡ ܢܦܫܬܗ—"Now order that the angel[s] of that and that soul come and bring here the souls with them").

systematic. The *Zephaniah* fragment, the Nag Hammadi *Apocalypse of Paul* and the *Testament of Abraham* undoubtedly represent literary parallels and perhaps direct models for our scene; but the relation between God and man that the imagery of the *Apocalypse of Paul* outlines in judicial terms conveys a new meaning that can be best understood when our text is interpreted within its social and cultural context.

2 God's Dreadful Tribunal: a 4th-Century Nightmare

In the 4th century, the frightening vision of God's tribunal is strikingly widespread. This was highlighted especially by Brent Shaw in a seminal article on "judicial nightmares."[27] In the apocalyptic vision described by Jerome in his famous 22d epistle, which was written around the same time as the *Apocalypse of Paul*, Jerome recalls that in the first period of his anchoritic retirement, when he was not yet able to give up the pleasure of reading Cicero and other classics, he suddenly "was caught up in the spirit and dragged before the judgment seat of the Judge."[28] In Jerome's case, it seems likely that it was a sense of guilt that had shaped the apocalyptic vision in the form of a tribunal scene ("the tribunal before which I lay").[29] The first act of this tribunal scene is an inquiry that focuses on the defendant and his identity: "He who presided asked who and what I was, and I replied: 'I am a Christian.' "[30] The indicted stands naked before God, as in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, but he still attempts to conceal his sin; God, however, knows the truth about Jerome's soul and pronounces the well-known sentence *ciceronianus es, non christianus*.[31] This proclamation is followed by a scourging punishment, but even worse, "the fire of conscience" torments Jerome far more

27 Brent Shaw, "Judicial Nightmares and Christian Memory," *JECS* 11 (2003): 533–563. On Jerome in particular, also see Jacqueline Amat's study on dreams and visions: Jacqueline Amat, *Songes et visions: L'au-delà dans la littérature latine tardive* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985), 219–221.

28 Hieronymus, *Epistula* 22 (*Ad Eustochium*) 30 (CSEL 54, 190,8 Hilberg): *Raptus in spiritu ad tribunal iudicis pertrahor*.

29 Hieronymus, *Epistula* 22 (*Ad Eustochium*) 30 (191,11 H.): *Tribunal, ante quod iacui*.

30 Hieronymus, *Epistula* 22 (*Ad Eustochium*) 30 (190,10–11 H.): *Interrogatus condicionem christianum me esse respondi*.

31 Hieronymus, *Epistula* 22 (*Ad Eustochium*) 30 (190,12 H.).

than the scourging.[32] Here, we are confronted once again with the visual representation of God's omniscience and the ashamed silence of the sinner (Jerome's *obmutui*[33] exactly as the hypocrite in the *Apocalypse of Paul*), albeit in addition we also see the internal turmoil that is experienced by the sinner. If this parallels the representation of the hypocrite we have observed in our *Apocalypse*, then in a certain sense it completes it, as it contributes to the embedding of "the show of judgment and punishment in the heart of Christian discipline."[34]

Another parallel can be found in the so-called *Vision of Dorotheus*, a fragmentary poem commonly dated to the second half of the 4th century.[35] Although the plot of this vision is not always clear, it is evident that at a certain point the protagonist undergoes a sort of judgment by Christ ("he pronounced this accusation against me"),[36] who, as God the Judge had done in Jerome's vision, orders that the defendant be scourged. Here, too, the punishment triggers remorse in the accused: "I began to realize what I had done, and in spite of my pain I endured the torture with more steadfastness."[37]

A further parallel is found in the *Life of Evagrius* in Palladius' *Lausiac History*, where another well-known night "extasis" (ἐκστάσεως . . . ἐν τῇ νυκτί) is described.[38] The young deacon Evagrius is in love with the wife of a high Constantinopolitan official. One night, he has a dream in the form of an "angelic vision" (ἀγγελικὴ ὀπτασία),[39] where, escorted by angels-soldiers, he is brought before a tribunal and then led to prison. In the middle of this unfortunate situation, an angel changes form into that of a good friend of Evagrius, suggesting that he leaves Constantinople. Although God does not appear in the dream, his presence is implied by the role of punishing angels, who traditionally attend to God the judge in this type of visions. The tribunal, however, is explicitly mentioned (ὡς ἐν δικαστηρίῳ).[40] Since this dream will have eventually brought Evagrius, after a

32 Hieronymus, *Epistula* 22 (*Ad Eustochium*) 30 (190,13–15 H.): *Ilico obmutui et inter verbera—nam caedi me iusserat—conscientiae magis igne torquebar*.

33 Hieronymus, *Epistula* 22 (*Ad Eustochium*) 30 (190,13 H.).

34 Shaw, "Judicial Nightmares" (see note 27), 548.

35 *Visio Dorothei* (ed. André Hurst, Olivier Reverdin, and Jean Rudhardt, *Papyrus Bodmer XXIX: Vision de Dorothéos* [Cologny: Fondation Bodmer, 1984]).

36 *Visio Dorothei* 111 (61 H./R./R.): ἐπ'ἐμεῖο κατη[γορέων.

37 *Visio Dorothei* 148–149 (63 H./R./R.): ῥεχθὲν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνων / ἀλγής[ας δ'ὑπέμεινα] τόδε πλέον ἔμμενες αἰεί.

38 Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 38 (ed. Dom C. Butler, *The Lausiac History of Palladius* 2: *The Greek Text Edited with Introduction and Notes* [Texts and Studies: Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature 6; Cambridge: University Press, 1904], 119,6).

39 Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 38 (118,2 B.).

40 Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 38 (118,3 B.).

short stay in Jerusalem, to the Egyptian desert, it can be viewed as the founding event of his ascetic career. As in Jerome's dream, then, in that of Evagrius we observe an "embedding" of the themes of court and punishment "in the heart of Christian discipline,"[41] here again in association with the root of an anchoritic vocation.

A last parallel to Jerome, Palladius and the *Vision of Dorotheus* is represented by the final passage in Augustine's *Sermon* 308, which relates the vision of Tutuslymeni, a faithful of the community at Hippona, who had forced an acquaintance to perjury, in order to retrieve something he had lent to the latter.[42] In the same night, he had a vision in which a *praesidens excelsus*,[43] endowed with high authority, orders that Tutslymeni be beat. That the vision had been real, and not a mere dream, was proved by the wounds on Tutuslymeni's body, which were still visible the following day. The component of the sinner's repentance is not explicitly mentioned in Augustine's brief description, yet it is clear that different authors in different parts of the Empire, in the same years, could have conceived atonement visually in the form of the personal judgment of the soul in heaven, when it stands naked in front of God's throne and is punished with scourges, in order to compel the sinner to repent.[44]

Indeed it cannot be overlooked that all these texts (the *Apocalypse of Paul*, Jerome's epistle, the *Vision of Dorotheus*, Evagrius' dream in Palladius and Tutuslymeni's dream) are products of the same age, that is, the second half of the 4th century: their similarities are unlikely fortuitous. Considering these visions together, while maintaining the focus on the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the question should be asked, what attitude towards the divine underlies these tribunals? Or, to put it another way, why is a traditional image like that of a divine tribunal so frequently revived at this turning point of Late Antiquity, and why does this occur so often in the ascetic context?

41 Shaw, "Judicial Nightmares" (see note 27), 548.

42 The following story is still to be read in the *Patrologia Latina*: Augustinus, *Sermo* 308 (PL 38:1408–1410).

43 Augustinus, *Sermo* 308,5,5 (PL 38:1409): *Dicebat ergo iste Tutuslymeni . . . se pervenisse ad praesidentem excelsum quemdam*.

44 Another such example, which completely lacks the element of the judgment but includes the scourging punishment, is found in the story of the apostate Natalios in Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5,28,12 (GCS 9,1, 502,27–504,2 Schwartz/Mommsen).

3 Judicial Fears and Pachomian Monasticism

An initial attempt at answering this question can be made by simply recalling the classic arguments of Peter Brown, especially as expressed in his *The Making of Late Antiquity*. The 4th century witnesses an individualization of relationships with the divine. Brown argues that this is the century of the "friends of God," of those, that is, who have a privileged relationship with him and transmit this experience to the others. The average person no longer had easy access to God.[45] Nevertheless, we may add, in the rare cases where common people did have occasional contacts with the divine (such as the narrating voice of the *Vision of Dorotheus*, the young Jerome and Evagrius), these contacts are imagined in legal and bureaucratic forms of judgment and punishment. As to the *Apocalypse of Paul*, which almost undoubtedly comes from Egypt, it is easy to trace back its tribunal imagery to its Egyptian background, which well explains, on the level of widespread cultural perception, the appearance of such a feature in the representation of the hereafter.[46] The main examples of apocalyptic judicial imagery in 4th-century Egypt, however, are those we can find in the Pachomian corpus. Here we can observe the occurrence of the same judgment motifs that also feature in the *Apocalypse of Paul*. Some highly significant expressions can be read in the "instruction to a spiteful monk,"[47] attributed to Pachomius himself, even though it is a well-known fact that the text partially consists of an excerpt from a sermon by Athanasius of Alexandria, possibly adapted and molded into the new text by Pachomius himself.[48] Here the monastic leader exhorts his monk to virtue, for "when you arrive in the valley of Josaphat, the place of judgment, you are found naked, and all see your sins laid bare to God and men," and then he adds, "will you open your mouth? To say what?"[49] This silent response is exactly

45 Peter Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 56–80, esp. 56.

46 Sources and studies on this topic are countless. For a general orientation see John G. Griffiths, *The Divine Verdict: A Study of Divine Judgment in the Ancient Religions* (Studies in the History of Religion [Supplements to Numen] 52; Leiden: Brill, 1991), and Jan Assmann, *Ma'at: Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im alten Ägypten* (Beck'sche Reihe 1403; München: Beck, 2006).

47 Pachomius, *Instructio ad monachum malevolentem* (CSCO 159, Lefort; trans. Armand Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia: The Lives, Rules and Other Writings of Saint Pachomius and His Disciples* 3 [Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1982]).

48 See Louis-T. Lefort, "S. Athanase écrivain copte," *Le Muséon* 46 (1940): 1–33.

49 Pachomius, *Instructio ad monachum malevolentem* 33 (13,9–14 L.; trans. 28 V.): ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲕⲉⲓ ⲉⲡⲉⲓⲁ ⲛ̄ⲓⲱⲥⲁⲫⲁⲧ ⲡⲙⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲇⲁⲡ ⲁⲩⲉⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ ⲉⲕⲕⲏ ⲕⲁⲓⲏⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲣⲉⲟⲩⲟⲛ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲑⲉⲱⲣⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲕⲛⲟⲃⲉ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲕⲁⲥⲭⲩⲙⲟⲥⲩⲛⲏ ⲉⲧⲥⲟⲗⲡ ⲉⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲙⲉ · · · ⲉⲕⲛⲁⲩⲱⲛ ⲛ̄ⲣⲱⲕ; ⲛ̄ⲧⲭⲟⲟⲥ ⲭⲉⲟⲩ;

the reaction of the hypocrite's soul in the *Apocalypse of Paul*; it keeps silent because self-justification is futile, and indeed, the nakedness of the hypocrite's soul in the presence of God is explicitly emphasized. Pachomius then reinforces his statements with the words of Athanasius: "You will give an account of these [sins] at the judgment seat of Christ, while the whole of God's creation looks at you, and the whole army of angels is present with swords unsheathed to force you to give an account and confess your sins."[50] Also the words of reciprocity spoken by Christ are reminiscent of a formulation which recurs in the *Apocalypse of Paul*: "You have not respected my image, you have scorned me and dishonored me. Therefore, I shall have no concern for you in the depth of your anguish . . . you insulted the poor: it was I that you insulted."[51] It is indeed useful to compare these words with the address to the upright in *Apocalypse of Paul* 14: *quemadmodum me haec non contristauit, nec ego eam non contristabo. Sicut enim miserta est, et ego miserebor.*[52] In the whole instruction ascetic practice and the observance of a charitable behavior are primarily viewed in the perspective of a fearful judgment awaiting the monk, and it is particularly significant that those details that so closely parallel the *Apocalypse of Paul* do not come from Athanasius' writing, but from the pen of the Pachomian writer.[53] In the third preserved catechesis attributed to him, Theodore, Pachomius' disciple, makes utterances that are even closer to the judgment scene in the *Apocalypse of Paul* and confirm that these monastic exhortations share the same imagery as the apocalyptic text:

> If we become lovers of honors in this age we oblige God to produce the record of the debt (*cheirographon*) that stands against us, and the shame of our intimate acts and thoughts at Christ's tribunal before the angels and all the saints, when we shall be naked and shall not have the means of flying elsewhere than towards *the flame that consumes the foes* (Is 26,11; Heb 10,27), nor shall we have the means of covering our shame anyway.[54]

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50 Pachomius, *Instructio ad monachum malevolentem* 38 (15,27–31 L.; trans. 31 V.): ⲉⲧⲉⲕⲛⲁϩⲗⲟⲅⲟⲥ ⲉⲁⲣⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲙ̄ⲡⲃⲏⲙⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲭⲣⲓⲥⲧⲟⲥ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲥⲱⲛⲧ̄ ⲧⲏⲣⲟ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲑⲉⲱⲣⲉⲓ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲕ ⲉⲣⲉⲛ̄ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲥⲧⲣⲁϯⲁ ⲧⲏⲣⲥ̄ ⲁⲉⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲉⲛⲉⲩⲥⲏⲇⲉ ⲧⲟⲕⲙ̄ ⲉⲩⲁⲛⲁⲅⲕⲁⲍⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲕ ⲉⲧⲣⲉⲕⲁ-ⲡⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓⲍⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲣⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲕⲛⲟⲃⲉ. For the parallel with Athanasius, see Lefort, "S. Athanase" (see note 48), 11.

51 Pachomius, *Instructio ad monachum malevolentem* 41 (17,11–15 L.; trans. 33 V.): ⲙⲡⲉⲕϯⲥⲟ ⲉⲧⲁϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ ⲁⲕⲥⲟⲩ̈ⲧ̄ ⲁⲕⲃⲁⲃⲱⲧ ⲁⲕϯ̈ⲱⲡⲉ ⲛⲁⲓ · ⲉⲧⲃⲉⲡⲁⲓ ⲛ̄ϯⲛⲁϯⲥⲟ ⲁⲛ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ ⲉⲙ̄ⲡⲉϩⲱⲩ̈ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲕⲁⲛⲁⲅⲕⲏ · · · ⲁⲕⲥⲉⲩ̈ⲭⲣⲏⲛⲉⲕⲉ, ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ϩⲱ ⲡⲉⲧⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲩ̈ ⲙⲙⲟⲓ.

52 *Apocalypsis Pauli latina* 14 (92,15–16 S./H. [Paris and St. Gall manuscripts]).

53 See in particular the passage quoted above (note 49) with its emphasis on the nakedness and silence of the sinner before the judgment seat of God.

54 Theodorus, *Instructio tertia* 8 (CSCO 159, 44,7–12 Lefort; trans. Veilleux, *Koinonia* 3 [see note 47], 97–98): ⲉⲛⲱⲁⲛⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲓⲧⲁⲉⲓⲟⲛ ⲅⲁⲣ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲓⲁⲓⲱⲛ, ⲉⲛⲁⲛⲁⲅⲕⲁⲍⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲧⲣⲉϥⲛ̄ⲡⲉⲛⲭⲉⲓⲣⲟⲅⲣⲁⲫⲟⲛ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲣⲟⲛ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲡⲱⲩ̈ⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲛϩⲃⲏⲩⲉ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲛⲉⲛⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡϩⲏⲧ ϩⲓⲡⲃⲏⲙⲁ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲭ̄ⲥ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲙⲧⲟ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ

It is evident that these ascetics imagined God's judgment seat in terms that recall the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the apocalyptic repertoire on post-mortem judgment that our *Apocalypse* shares with other apocrypha. The most meaningful element is the mentioning of the *cheirographon* as a report of the deeds committed by the defendant-soul. But how does the "tribunal" manifest in the everyday life of a coenobium? This imagery could only have been persuasive for a monk if indeed he were regularly exposed to it in his immediate environment. Once again, the first step towards an answer can be provided by Brown's concept of the "friends of God," such as spiritual fathers like Pachomius and his successor Theodore, people who had a privileged contact with the heavenly sphere and transmit it to the others by virtue of their particular way of life. They brought people closer to God, but at the same time the unique authority given to them by God implicitly confirmed the distance between him and those who were not bestowed with the same authority: the authoritative spiritual father represented the distant God of this time. Such a gift assumed many forms, but a particularly important one was discernment. The most relevant witness to this is an episode in the *Letter of Ammon*, where the author describes how he attended a gathering of monks at Phbow in the Thebaid, under the direction of Theodore, and an audience of 600 monks begged the latter to discern their souls and to reveal to them their sins: "one of the monks arose . . . and asked Theodore to address his faults before them all."[55] Here we see how, while the distance between the common monk and God prevents the monk from clearly discerning his own soul, the spiritual father receives from God the power to see it as it truly is. This practice mirrors the nakedness of the soul before God in the heavenly visions of Jerome and Dorotheus, as well as in the post-mortem judgment in the *Apocalypse of Paul*. In this sense, here Theodore's discernment can be viewed as representing God's judgment, since it is God himself who enables the father to see others' sinful thoughts. It is tempting, then, to see the tribunal setting of the *Apocalypse of Paul* as a representation of the earthly coenobitic practice attested by Ammon's letter. Another interesting scene can be read in the Bohairic *Life of Pachomius*, where a vision is accorded to Pachomius and some of his brethren. Here, although there is no immediate parallel with the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the text showcases a conception of the function of the

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ⲛ̅ⲛ̅ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ, ⲉⲛⲕⲏ ⲕⲁϩⲏⲩ, ⲉⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲑⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲱⲧ ⲉⲗⲗⲁⲩ ⲛ̅ⲥⲁϩⲏⲧϥ̅ ⲙ̅ⲡⲕⲱϩⲧ̅ ⲉⲧⲛⲁⲟⲩⲱⲙ ⲛ̅ⲛ̅ϫⲁϫⲉ, ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲙ̅ⲛ̅ⲑⲉ ⲉϩⲱⲃⲥ̅ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲛⲱⲓⲡⲉ ⲉⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̅· This relevant occurrence of the loanword **χειρογραφον** was overlooked by Lefort in his index.

55 *Littera Ammonis* 2–3 (PTS 27, 125,11–17 Goehring; trans. ibid., 160): ηὗρον συνηθροισμένους μονάζοντας περί που ἑξακοσίους . . . Καί τις τῶν μοναζόντων ἀναστὰς . . . τὸν Θεόδωρον ἠξίου εἰπεῖν αὐτοῦ τὰ πλημμελήματα ἐπὶ πάντων.

angels in the Eucharist which illuminates certain aspects of the role of angels in the *Apocalypse of Paul*: when they are gathered for the Eucharist, the monks see an angel at the altar, "dispensing to those who were worthy the sacred mystery through the hand of the priest . . . who was dispensing them."[56] But if a monk is not worthy, the angel withdraws his hand and only the fleshly hand of the priest dispenses the mystery, reduced to simple food: "and if someone who was unworthy or defiled came forward to receive the sacred mysteries, the angel would withdraw his hand."[57] This scenario is similar to that in the *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* 25, where the presbyter Piammonas has a vision of an angel who stands by the altar during the Eucharist with a register in his hands and crosses out the names of absent monks, who are consequently doomed to die within thirteen days.[58] The document, in which the names and deeds of the monks are recorded, is once again called *cheirographon*. This similarity prompts at least two remarks: first, it further supports the hypothesis that the fear of the omniscience of God, manifested by the angel's powerful insight by means of registers, was an *idée fixe* of early Egyptian monasticism, inspired by earlier apocalyptic texts and later reappearing in the monastic *Apocalypse of Paul*. Second, this idea connects two otherwise heterogeneous scenes (the judgment in the *Apocalypse of Paul* and the Eucharist in the *Historia monachorum*) and sets them into a shared horizon of sense. The angel with the *cheirographon* is the connecting element, indicating that angelic surveillance at the altar, and the post-mortem judgment where angels read the *cheirographa*, have an analogous meaning within a monastic context: they aim to illustrate the monk's fear of God, which lies at the core of many of his practices, as fear of God's all-seeing eye.

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The judgment scene in the *Apocalypse of Paul* proves then to be a particularly useful observation point to assess the transformation of the apocalyptic discourse

56 *Vita Pachomii bohairica* 83 (CSCO 89, 93,27–94,1 Lefort; trans. Armand Veilleux, *Pachomian Koinonia* [see note 47], 110): ⲉⲫⲧ ⲙⲡⲓⲙⲩⲥⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲉⲧⲉⲙⲡ̣ⲱ̣ⲗ ϧⲉⲛⲧⲁⲓⲍ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲧ · · · ⲟⲩⲡⲣⲉⲥⲃⲩⲧⲉⲣⲟⲥⲡⲉ.

57 *Vita Pachomii bohairica* 83 (94,2–4 L.; trans. 56 V.): ⲉ̣ⲱⲡⲡ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲣⲉ̣ⲱ̣ⲁⲛⲟⲩⲁⲓ ⲉⲫⲙ̄ⲡⲡ̣ⲱ̣ⲗ ⲁⲛ ⲓⲉ ⲉⲫⲃⲁϩⲉⲙ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲫⲧ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲫⲟⲩⲓ ⲉϧⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲃⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϧⲉⲛⲛⲓⲙⲩⲥⲧⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ ⲱ̣ⲁⲣⲉⲡⲓⲁⲅ–ⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲥⲉⲕⲧⲉⲫⲭⲓⲍ ⲉⲣⲟⲫ.

58 Ps.-Palladius, *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* 25 (ed. André-Jean Festugière [Subsidia Hagiographica 34; Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1961], 134,6–11): ὁρᾷ ἄγγελον ἑστῶτα ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου καὶ τοὺς προσερχομένους τῇ χάριτι ἀδελφοὺς σημειούμενον καὶ γράφοντα αὐτῶν τὰ ὀνόματα ἐν βιβλίῳ. μὴ παραγενομένων δέ τινων ἐν τῇ συνάξει εἶδεν τὰ ὀνόματα αὐτῶν ἀπαλειφόμενα· οἱ δὲ μετὰ δεκατρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐτελεύτησαν.

at the time when this text was produced. The scene certainly showcases stereotyped elements; but although their features had not dramatically changed, the comparison with other texts from that time allows us to appreciate how significantly the meaning of these elements had been reinvented. This transformation in meaning did not concern images, but rather something deeper: the traditional imagery had become internalized discipline.

Acknowledgement: I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Maya Goldberg, who carefully revised my English.